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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EURE-00 /059 W
----------032519 081426Z /45
P 081343Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4367
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 07152

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: FEDERAL GROUPS PROMOTING NATIONAL UNITY

1. SUMMARY. PARTI QUEBECOIS (PQ) PREMIER LEVESQUE RECENTLY COMMENTED THAT HE WAS "KIND OF DIZZY" KEEPING TRACK OF NUMBER AND ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES SET UP BY TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY. WE SYMPATHIZE SINCE TRUDEAU'S FEDERALIST STRATEGY TO DATE HAS LEANED HEAVILY ON CREATION OF COMPLEX OF COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES, AND GROUPS, ALL CONCERNED WITH NATIONAL UNITY QUESTION AND NEARLY ALL OF WHICH TASKED WITH PROVIDING CABINET WITH INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS. IN EFFORT TO CLARIFY SITUATION, WE PROVIDE BELOW BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THESE GROUPS, ETC. END SUMMARY.

2. FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS OFFICE (FPRO): CREATED IN 1968 PRIMARILY TO PREPARE FEDERAL POSITIONS FOR THE UN-SUCCESSFUL 1971 FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE AT VICTORIA, THE FPRO WAS, UNTIL 1975, AN ELEMENT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE; IN 1975, IT BECAME INDEPENDENT AGENCY REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE CABINET. HEADED BY GORDON ROBERTSON, PROBABLY THE MOST SEASONED AND BUREAUCRATICALLY ADROIT
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CIVIL SERVANT IN OTTAWA, THE FPRO MONITORS AND REPORTS TO CABINET ON VIRTUALLY ALL ELEMENTS OF OTTAWA'S RELATIONS WITH THE PROVINCES. IN VIEW OF THE FPRO'S RELATIVE LONGE-VITY AND ESTABLISHED ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, MOST OF THE NEW NATIONAL UNITY MECHANISMS HAVE BEEN GRAFTED ONTO THE FPRO, UTILIZING AS NECESSARY EXISTING EXPERTISE IN FPRO. AND ALTHOUGH THE VARIOUS NEW UNITS MAY ENJOY CONSIDERABLE

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INDEPENDENCE INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE, DIRECT ACCESS TO THE PM AND/OR THE CABINET, IT IS THE EMBASSY'S IMPRESSION THAT RARELY, IF EVER, DO MAJOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS GO FORWARD WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT OF FPRO CHIEF ROBERTSON.

3. THE GWYN GROUP: UNDER DIRECTION OF NICOLAS GWYN, ASST. SECRETARY TO CABINET FOR FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL RELATIONS (STUDIES AND RESEARCH), THIS GROUP CONSISTS OF CIVIL SERVANTS ON LOAN TO FPRO FROM VARIOUS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. THEIR TASK IS TO PREPARE DETAILED STUDIES, FEDERAL AGENCY BY AGENCY, ON RELATIONSHIP WITH QUEBEC. AIM, AS DESCRIBED BY FPRO OFFICIAL, IS TO COMPILE "DOSSIER" OF STATISTICAL DATA TO COUNTER PERIODIC PQ CHARGES THAT QUEBEC/OTTAWA RELATIONSHIP DISADVANTAGEDUS TO FORMER.

4. TELLIER GROUP: SMALL (6-MAN) OFFICE LOCATED IN THE FPRO AND UNDER DIRECTION OF PAUL TELLIER, YOUNG (37) FORMER ASST. DEPUTY MIN OF DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT. TELLIER SERVED AS DEPUTY SECRETARY TO CABINET OF FORMER QUEBEC PREMIER BOURASSA AND REPORTEDLY IS POLITICALLY ASTUTE BOTH ON QUEBEC AND FEDERAL POLITICAL ISSUES. CREATED IN FEBRUARY, GROUP PROVIDES ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND, MOST IMPORTANT, TO CABINET ON ENTIRE RANGE OF QUEBEC/OTTAWA INTERGOVERNMENTAL DEALINGS. GROUP, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS PLAYED PROMINENT ROLE IN ONGOING CONFIDENTIAL

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS ON SENSITIVE QUESTION OF CONTROL OF IMMIGRATION. EACH MEMBER OF OFFICE HAS SUBSTANTIVE AREAS OF PRIMARY JURISDICTION. MUCH OF WORK APPEARS TO BE TACTICAL INVOLVING DAY-TO-DAY DETAIL OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, BUT ONE GROUP MEMBER, CLOVIS DEMERS, ASSURED EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT GROUP DOES FORMULATE AND RECOMMEND TO CABINET VARIETY OF STRATEGIC POLICY OPTIONS. TELLIER WORKS FOR AND CONSULTS CLOSELY WITH FPRO BOSS GORDON ROBERTSON AND MEETS REGULARLY ON NATIONAL UNITY ISSUE WITH A LIBERAL CAUCUS GROUP HEADED BY HEALTH MIN. MARC LALONDE. HE REPORTEDLY ALSO HAS DIRECT ACCESS TO TRUDEAU.

5. SPECIAL CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISOR TO THE PM; DONALD S. THORSON: APPOINTED IN MAY, THORSON HAD BEEN DEPUTY MIN OF JUSTICE SINCE 1973 AND A FEDERAL LAWYER FOR 20 YEARS. HIS EXPERIENCE IN OTTAWA'S JUDICIAL AFFAIRS ATTESTED TO BY FACT THAT HE WAS CHIEF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL IN JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WHEN TRUDEAU WAS JUSTICE MIN (1967-68). THORSON'S MANDATE IS APPARENTLY TO ADVISE TRUDEAU ON POSSIBLE CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS PROVIDING FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS WITH PROVINCES. THORSON REPORTEDLY DESCRIBED HIS

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TASK AS DETERMINING "WHO DOES WHAT BEST" FOR POTENTIAL
POWER RESHUFFLE. LOCATED IN THE FPRO AND REPORTING
THROUGH ROBERTSON, THORSON CHAIRS CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION
COMMITTEE WITH MEMBERSHIP OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS.
EXISTENCE OF THIS COMMITTEE IS, WE UNDERSTAND, NOT PUBLICLY
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KNOWN. THORSON WAS JOINED IN JULY BY FRANK CARTER, DEPUTY
SECRETARY TO THE CABINET FOR FEDERAL PROVINCIAL RELATIONS
IN FPRO. CARTER WILL RETIRE FROM DEPUTY SEC. POSITION IN
FALL TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WITH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 OTTAWA 07152

THORSON. THORSON OPERATION APPARENTLY DOVETAILS WITH
TELLIER GROUP WITH FORMER ADVISING ON CONSTITUTIONAL
ASPECTS OF OTTAWA/PROVINCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO QUEBEC AND LATTER HANDLING POLITICAL/ADMINIS-
TRATIVE ASPECTS OF OTTAWA-QUEBEC RELATIONS.

6. NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CANADIAN UNITY: CREATED IN JULY,
TASK FORCE IS HEADED BY JEAN-LUC PEPIN, FORMER HEAD OF
ANTI-INFLATION BOARD, AND JOHN ROBARTS, FORMER PREMIER OF
ONTARIO. TASK FORCE INCLUDES FOUR OTHER REPS. FROM ACROSS
COUNTRY BUT DOES NOT YET INCLUDE A QUEBEC REP. MANDATE OF
TASK FORCE IS FOR ONE YEAR AND, ACCORDING TO TRUDEAU, IS
TO FOSTER SUPPORT OF GENERAL PUBLIC AND PARTICULARLY NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR CANADIAN UNITY; TO PUB-
LICIZE AND COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SUCH ELEMENTS; AND TO
GIVE GENERAL ADVICE TO PM ON NATIONAL UNITY QUESTION.
LITTLE HAS BEEN HEARD FROM OR ABOUT TASK FORCE SINCE ITS
FORMATION REFLECTING, NO DOUBT, ITS PRESENT PREOCCUPATION
IN ORGANIZING ITSELF TO TACKLE VERY BROAD MANDATE. IT IS

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INDEPENDENT OF THE FPRO.

7. NATIONAL UNITY INFORMATION GROUP -- STAFFED BY ABOUT
10 CIVIL SERVANTS FROM VARIOUS FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS, THIS
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GROUP TASKED WITH "MAKING AVAILABLE TO CANADIANS INFORM-
ATION AND FACTS FAVORABLE TO CANADA RATHER THAN TO SEPAR-
ATISM", IN WORDS OF PM TRUDEAU. ANNOUNCED JULY 25 BY
TRUDEAU IN COMMONS, GROUP HAS ALREADY LED STORMY, EARLY
EXISTENCE. TRUDEAU FIRST ASSERTED THAT GROUP DESIGNED TO
COUNTER EFFORTS OF 10 OR 15 OFFICES SET UP BY PQ GOVERN-
MENT TO SPREAD SEPARATIST MESSAGE. WHEN IT WAS LATER
REVEALED THAT THESE OFFICES HAD BEEN SET UP BY FORMER
LIBERAL, BOURASSA GOVERNMENT AND WERE APPARENTLY APOLITICAL,
TRUDEAU ADMITTED HE WAS OFF BASE MAKING COMPARISON.
OPPOSITION HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IT MAY OPERATE AS
LIBERAL PROPAGANDA VEHICLE, AND SOME JOURNALISTS HAVE
COMMENTED THAT ITS ESTABLISHMENT IS MERELY RESURRECTION, ON
SMALLER SCALE, OF INFORMATION CANADA WHICH WAS ABOLISHED
BY GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR IN ECONOMY MOVE. JURISDICTIONAL
POSITION OF THIS GROUP IS UNUSUALLY DIFFUSE EVEN WHEN
COMPARED TO OVERLAPPING LINES OF OTHER ENTITIES IN NATIONAL
UNITY POT-POURRI. IT IS FORMALLY UNDER SECRETARY OF STAT-
E'S OFFICE BUT IS SUBJECT TO GENERAL SUPERVISION OF
TELLIER GROUP. INCREASINGLY, HOWEVER, IT IS WORKING FOR
PEPIN-ROBARTS GROUP TO SPREAD FEDERALIST MESSAGE TO CANAD-
IAN PUBLIC.

8. LALONDE LIBERAL CAUCUS GROUP: UNDER HEALTH MIN MARC
LALONDE, THE "QUEBEC LIEUTENANT" (LEADER OF QUEBEC LIBERAL
CAUCUS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUEBEC PATRONAGE, ETC.),
THIS GROUP INCLUDES: REVENUE MIN. MONIQUE BEGIN; SEC OF
STATE JOHN ROBERTS; AND LIBERAL MPS PIERRE DE BANE,
JACQUES OLIVIER, JOHN REID. PROVIDING POLITICAL ADVICE ON
NATIONAL UNITY QUESTION AND, AS NOTED ABOVE, WORKING
CLOSELY WITH TELLIER GROUP, IT OPERATES IN TURN UNDER
"POLITICAL CABINET COMMITTEE" OF MINISTERS CO-CHAIRED BY
LALONDE AND SENATOR KEITH DAVEY.
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9. COMMENT: ABOVE INDEX DESCRIBES ONLY THE PRINCIPAL
GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WORKING ON NATIONAL UNITY QUESTION
IN THIS CAPITAL. (ONE COMMENTATOR CALLED THESE GROUPS A
NEW "COTTAGE INDUSTRY".) IN VIEW OF MAGNITUDE AND VITAL

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IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC, IT IS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT VIRT-
UALLY EVERY FEDERAL AGENCY HAS AN INDIVIDUAL OR INDIVIDUALS
WORKING FULLTIME ON THE ISSUE. FURTHER, TRUDEAU IS KNOWN
TO SOLICIT ADVICE FROM RANGE OF KNOWLEDGEABLE FIGURES IN
PRIVATE SECTOR SUCH AS,E.G., PAUL DESMARAIS, CHAIRMAN OF
POWER CORP. AND HEAD OF PATRONAT, QUEBEC EMPLOYERS ASSOC-
IATION.

10. IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WE SHALL COMMENT ON TRUDEAU'S
CURRENT STRATEGY TOWARDS QUEBEC AND HOW THE WORK OF THESE
GROUPS RELATES TO THIS STRATEGY. ENDERS

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